Amino acid taurine may extend life and enhance health, studies show

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- Taurine levels decline with age in mice, monkeys and humans.

- Taurine supplementation in middle-aged mice increased their lifespan by 10-12%.
- Supplementation improved health parameters, including bone mass, muscle endurance and immune function.
- Human studies show higher taurine levels are associated with better health outcomes.
- Randomized clinical trials are needed to confirm taurine's anti-aging effects in humans.

In a groundbreaking study published in the prestigious journal *Science*, researchers from Columbia University unveiled compelling evidence that taurine, a semi-essential amino acid, could be a key to extending life and enhancing health. The study, led by Vijay Yadav, PhD, found that taurine deficiency is a significant driver of aging in animals, and that supplementation with taurine can significantly slow the aging process. The findings could have profound implications for human health and longevity, opening up new avenues for anti-aging interventions.

Key findings of the study

1. **Taurine levels decline with age:** The study found that taurine levels in the blood decrease substantially with age in mice, monkeys and humans. In humans, 60-year-olds had only about one-third the taurine levels of 5-year-olds.

2. **Taurine supplementation extends lifespan:** When middle-aged mice were fed taurine daily, their median lifespan increased by 10 to 12 percent, and their life expectancy at 28 months (equivalent to 80 human years) increased by 18 to 25 percent.

3. **Health span improvements:** Taurine supplementation in middle-aged mice led to a host of health benefits, including reduced weight gain, increased bone mass, improved muscle endurance, and enhanced immune function. Similar health improvements were observed in middle-aged rhesus monkeys.

4. **Cellular and molecular benefits:** At the cellular level, taurine reduced DNA damage, suppressed cellular senescence (the accumulation of "zombie cells"), and improved mitochondrial function, all of which are key factors in the aging process.

5. **Human correlations:** In a separate analysis of 12,000 European adults, higher taurine levels were associated with better health outcomes, including lower rates of type 2 diabetes, reduced obesity, and lower inflammation.

The role of taurine in health and aging

An overview: Taurine is one of the most abundant amino acids in the human body, crucial for various cell functions, including cardiovascular health, immune function and neurological function. It is naturally produced in the body but can also be obtained through diet, primarily from animal products like shellfish, turkey and chicken.

Why taurine matters for aging: The decline in taurine levels with age suggests that taurine deficiency may contribute to the aging process. The study's findings indicate that restoring taurine levels through supplementation can have significant anti-aging effects, potentially extending both lifespan and health span.

Implications for human health

Potential for anti-aging interventions: The study's results provide a strong rationale for further research into taurine as an anti-aging intervention in humans. While the study was conducted in animals, the consistent health benefits observed across different species suggest that taurine could have similar effects in humans.

Health benefits beyond longevity: Beyond extending lifespan, taurine supplementation offers a range of health benefits, including improved cardiovascular health, reduced inflammation, and enhanced immune function. These benefits could significantly improve the quality of life in old age.

Plant-based diets and taurine deficiency: Given that taurine is primarily found in animal products, individuals on plant-based diets may be at higher risk of taurine deficiency. The study's findings highlight the importance of ensuring adequate taurine intake, especially for those following vegan or vegetarian diets.

Next steps and future research

Randomized clinical trials: To determine if taurine has similar anti-aging effects in humans, randomized clinical trials are needed. Such trials would measure a wide range of health parameters and could provide definitive answers about taurine's potential as an anti-aging intervention.

Integration with other anti-aging strategies: Taurine's potential as an anti-aging intervention can be explored in conjunction with other promising strategies, such as metformin,

rapamycin, and NAD analogs. This integrated approach could lead to more effective anti-aging interventions in the future.

A new frontier in anti-aging research

The discovery that taurine deficiency is a driver of aging and that supplementation can significantly extend lifespan and enhance health is a significant breakthrough in anti-aging research. While more studies are needed to confirm these findings in humans, the potential implications for human health and longevity are profound. As we continue to explore the molecular basis of aging, taurine may prove to be a crucial component in the quest for healthier, longer lives.

Sources for this article include:

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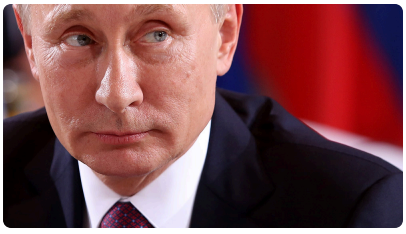

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